

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1673

ANSWERED ON:14.03.2005

SIZE OF AGRICULTURAL LAND

Mahato Shri Bir Sing;Mahato Shri Sunil Kumar

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the area of agricultural land has been shrinking for the last several years;
- (b) if so, the average size of agricultural land at present in the country;
- (c) whether neither modern equipments can be used on small size agricultural land nor the agricultural yield from it can fetch good return; and
- (d) if so, the reaction of the Government in this regard and the arrangements that have since been made to check further shrinkage of agricultural land?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA)

(a): The land-use classification data indicates that the net sown area has increased from 140.27 million hectare in 1970-71 to 141.15 million hectare in 2001-2002. During the same period, the area under non-agricultural uses has increased from 16.48 million hectare to 23.97 million hectare. It indicates that the net sown area has increased by 0.88 million hectare, whereas area under non-agricultural uses has increased by 7.49 million hectare. It implies, therefore, that even if some agricultural land has been diverted to non-agricultural uses, a large area has been brought under cultivation through reclamation of wastelands and other degraded lands, thereby, increasing the net sown area.

(b): As per Agricultural Census 1995-96, average area per holding is 1.41 ha.

(c): The modern equipments can be gainfully used on small size agricultural land also. The modern equipments with small tractors, power tillers and with animals would not only reduce the drudgery of operation but also are likely to enhance the productivity on account of better seed- bed preparation, placement of seed & fertilizer and timeliness of operations etc.

(d): Land is a State Subject and therefore steps to stop conversion of agricultural land are to be taken by the State Governments. Government of India have issued National Land Use Policy Outlines (NLPO) to all the States and Union Territories for follow up action. One of the action points of NLPO relates to checking diversion of highly productive land for non-agricultural purposes. Some of the States are having legislative mandate while some other States are having executive instructions in this regard.

In addition Government of India is implementing various programmes namely

- (i) National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NWDPA),
- (ii) Soil Conservation for Enhancing Productivity of Degraded Lands in the Catchments of River Valley Project and Flood Prone River (RVP & FPR),
- (iii) Reclamation of Alkali Soil (RAS),
- (iv) Watershed Development Project in Shifting Cultivation Areas (WDPSA)
- (v) Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP),
- (vi) Desert Development Programme (DDP),
- (vii) Integrated Waste-land Development Programme (IWDP) etc. to bring these lands to better agricultural uses.